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Record Supplement

for

November, 1943

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CON	Continental	PAR	Paraclete
CX	Columbia Two-Record Masterworks Set	SON	Sonart
D	Decca	V	Victor
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Vol. VI

Record Supplement for November, 1943

No. 11

BEETHOVEN (LUDWIG VAN)

BEETHOVEN: Quartet No. 7, F major, Opus 59, No. 1 ("Rasoumovsky" No. 1) & HAYDN: Quartet No. 83, Opus 103—Menuetto ma non troppo. Busch Quartet. Six 12" records (12 sides) in Set CM-543†; price complete with album \$6.83.

This much-recorded Quartet (at least six complete earlier recordings can be traced) is one of the easiest of access among great chamber works. The non-enthusiast for what is commonly, if mistakenly, looked upon as a difficult or esoteric form of music can, that is, react to the "Rasoumovsky" No. 1 with the same warmth a new symphony or concerto might evoke. It begins with a beautiful, expressive—and whistleable—melody. It unfolds a whole series of melodic enchantments, bordering at times on the lush, and never for a moment goes off into those realms of intellection and introspection that make Beethoven's later quartets the delight of some, the despair of many.

It would be a pleasure to say that the new Busch Quartet recording of the "Rasoumovsky" No. 1 is justified—as any new release should be today—by being in many ways not only better than any other recording available, but also superior per se. But honesty forbids such praise for a performance in which the first violinist's tone is frequently harsh and strident, and at times sharp as to pitch. Memory forbids it by holding on to earlier recordings by the Budapest Quartet and the Léner Quartet, both now unavailable. Foresight forbids it by insisting that the recording by the Philharmonia Quartet, released in England, may shortly be available here.

The best that can be said of CM-543† is that its only rival in current American catalogues, the recording by the Coolidge Quartet (VM-804†) is ruled out by stylistic considerations. It is sincerely to be regretted that COLUMBIA did not see fit to give us a recording that might have made the importation of that by the Philharmonia unnecessary—one by the Budapest Quartet. In times of shellac shortage, delays in manufacture, and shrinking catalogues, a merely adequate recording or a second-best recording is a battle lost.

BEETHOVEN: Trio No. 7 ("Archduke"), B flat major, Opus 97. Artur Rubinstein (piano), Jascha Heifetz (violin), Emanuel Feuermann (cello). Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set VM-949†; price complete with album \$5.77.

One of the most important events in the 1942 world of records was the release, in November of that year, of the Rubinstein-Heifetz-Feuermann recording of Schubert's Trio No. 1, in B flat major, Opus 99. It may be said at once that VICTOR has similarly enriched the lists in 1943 with the same trio's recording of the beautiful Beethoven "Archduke." There is more than a little similarity in the two events. Not only are both piano trios in B flat major and both played by the same three superlative instrumentalists. The musical qualities of the "Archduke" are somewhat Schubertian, just as—not to stretch a point too far—the Schubert B flat intermittently portends Beethoven. This is really to say that the two piano trios, composed during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century by the two greatest practicing composers then alive, signalize the hour in musical history when romanticism was beginning to bloom out of the classic period. Both are to be ranked among the most delightful works in the entire chamber repertoire.

For some time now, no recording of the "Archduke" has been available. An old one, played by the late William Murdoch, Albert Sammons, and William Henry Squire (CM-52) is largely forgotten. But few sets have maintained a more living reputation than that other "Archduke," wonderfully set forth by Alfred Cortot, Jacques Thibaud, and Pablo Casals. First released in England in April, 1929 (G-DB1223/7), it later became the enduringly popular VICTOR set VM-92. Time can do nothing, of course, to the preserved artistry of great musicians, but it at last became obvious that the thin, unresonant, and undifferentiated recording of even the late 1920's could not continue to satisfy listeners grown accustomed to the spacious realism of more modern methods. VM-92 went the way of CM-52. No "Archduke" remained. What was obvious was that any new one would have to be superlative if it were to challenge the memory of Cortot, Thibaud, and Casals.

In view of the fact that the new "Archduke" must have been recorded before May 25, 1942 (the date of Feuermann's death), it is impossible to understand why VICTOR delayed its release until October, 1943. For it is in every department a superlative set. No piano trio comes to mind as having been recorded anywhere with all the finesse, verisimilitude, and gleam of this recording. Against all tradition of renowned soloists briefly joined in a chamber ensemble, Rubinstein, Heifetz, and Feuermann play the "Archduke" with the free certainty of long association. Speaking of the artists individually, Rubinstein and Heifetz have been as well recorded elsewhere. But Feuermann's plastic and unponderous playing has nowhere else on records so clearly displayed the qualities that made him Casals' only legitimate heir.

Here, in VM-949†, in short, is great music greatly performed and flawlessly recorded. An occasional raspiness of record surface, fully excusable under wartime conditions, does nothing to diminish its unique values. It should find a place in every record library.

BRAHMS (JOHANNES)

BRAHMS: Waltz, A major (transcribed from A flat major) & **GERSHWIN:** Porgy and Bess—Summertime. André Kostelanetz & His Orchestra (in the Brahms); Lily Pons (soprano), with André Kostelanetz & His Orchestra (in the Gershwin). 12" record (2 sides) No. C-71491D; price \$1.05.

On this record, Lily Pons sings the popular *Summertime*, from *Porgy and Bess*, with certainty and dispatch, leading this reviewer to wonder if she may not be a misplaced lyric soprano of the operetta-musical comedy type. Surely she sings Gershwin better than she sings Mozart. Here her pitch is sure, and while not all of her English is comprehensible, she grasps and projects the essential character of the music in hand. Both as her accompaniment and in the unbelievably bad version of the Brahms Waltz, the Kostelanetz Orchestra is at its very worst, slick, overlush, drowned in oily string tones. The recording is faithful to the point of malignancy.

BUTTERWORTH (GEORGE)

BUTTERWORTH: A Shropshire Lad—Rhapsody. Hallé Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. 12" imported record (2 sides) No. G-C3287; price \$2.10.

George Sainton Kaye-Butterworth was born in London in 1885 and killed in action at Pozières on August 5, 1916. He was a disciple of Ralph Vaughan Williams. He intensely admired the clipped, elegiac poetry of A. E. Housman, whose *A Shropshire Lad* inspired the present rhapsody. Many English musicians cherish his works extravagantly and continue, more than twenty-five years after the event, to regard his early death as a heavy blow to British music.

A Shropshire Lad is by no means urgent music of the type of either *Belshazzar's Feast* or the *Moeran Symphony*, both reviewed in this issue. It is quiet, unassuming, folkloric, old fashioned. Those who like the most parochial, least universal side of British music will like this music most. It is expertly made. Sir Adrian Boult and the Hallé men give it a loving, if not a vivifying, performance. The recording is superb. It will not raise English modern music in the esteem of those who cannot understand some British critics' persistent overestimation of Elgar, Vaughan Williams, and Bax. It is likely to please admirers of the earliest of those three more than admirers of the last. It should be remarked that not entirely absent from its flowing lines is the spirit of Frederick Delius. And may this reviewer, in all humility, add that many other critics, agreeing with his high valuation of the recording as such, have found the music therein far more persuasive and enriching than he does?

GERSHWIN: Porgy and Bess—Summertime, see **BRAHMS:** Waltz, A major.

GLUCK (CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD)

GLUCK: Alceste—Divinités du Styx & **MEYERBEER:** Le Prophète—Ahl mon fils. Rise Stevens (mezzo-soprano), with orchestra conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-71491D; price \$1.05.

Rise Stevens here gives us a double as admirable in its way as her record of *Adieu, forêts*, from Tchaikovsky's *The Maid of Orleans*, and *O mio Fernando*, from Donizetti's *La Favorita* (C-71440D). Without suggesting the authority or stature of a great singer, Miss Stevens is an admirable artist when she selects materials relevant to her abilities. What she sings here falls into that category. Her *Divinités du Styx*, in what seems to be its original key, has nobility, and is not marred, as Helen Traubel's VICTOR recording (V-17268) is, by either over-recording or wildly wayward conducting. Miss Stevens addresses herself sincerely and understandingly to this marmoreally impressive and deeply moving invocation, one of Gluck's greatest pages, and the result is satisfying. Turning to Fidès' great aria, she again improves her singing with an understanding

of the text and situation of *Ahl mon fils* as one climax of *Le Prophète*. The recording catches her voice admirably. Mr. Leinsdorf's accompaniments are adequate and unobtrusive. Because it brings two great arias to the lists in good shape, put C-71491D down as a most welcome newcomer.

HAYDN: Quartet No. 83, Opus 103—Menuetto, see
BEETHOVEN: Quartet No. 7.

MENDELSSOHN (FELIX)

MENDELSSOHN: Symphony No. 4 ("Italian"), A major, Opus 90. New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Four 12" records (8 sides) in Set CM-538†; price complete with album \$4.73.

It will be a shame if the rumpus and threats of lawsuits that followed Columbia's release of the Beecham-New York Philharmonic Sibelius *Seventh* in any way obscure the high excellence of the present release. Beecham excels as a conductor of Mendelssohn for the same reasons that he excels as a conductor of Mozart: his impeccable sense of tempo, his firm and propulsive beat, and his full-blooded refusal to carve miniatures. In this recording, the men of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony gave the great Englishman the response he deserved. The result is far and away the best performance of the "Italian" Symphony ever heard on records.

Mendelssohn was a master orchestrator, the best revelation of whose works requires that there be not the slightest blurring or overlapping of instrumental lines. Listen, in this sharply etched performance, to the relaxed brilliance of the orchestra in the lovely second movement, so different from the tense stridency that too often tries to pass as brilliance. Notice the reasonable tempo of that final *saltarello*, giving through the beautifully calculated beat the effect of great speed with no sense of being rushed. Watch for yourself for the many touches by which Beecham delineates the coherent architecture of the symphony as a whole, giving it a design that arches from the opening to the final note. It may not convince you that Mendelssohn was one of the titans (it would be surprising to learn that Beecham so considers him), but it will give you a truly musical experience. What Mendelssohn well knew, Beecham never forgets—that delight is one of music's strongest arms.

In these records, the Philharmonic-Symphony sounds—as it has not sounded on all its records of the past few years—like a major orchestra, an organization of which New York might be proud, and for which it would not have to apologize to a Bostonian, a Philadelphian, or a Cleveland. COLUMBIA's recording engineers rose to the occasion. It is fervently to be hoped that its manufacturing department did likewise.

MEYERBEER: *Le Prophète*—*Ahl mon fils*, see
GLUCK: *Alceste*—*Divinités du Styx*.

MOERAN (ERNEST JOHN)

MOERAN: Symphony, G minor & RAWSTHORNE: Four Bagatelles for Piano (1938). Hallé Orchestra, conducted by Leslie Heward (in the Moeran); Denis Matthews (piano) (in the Rawsthorne). Six 12" imported records (12 sides) Nos. G-C3319/3324; price \$12.60.

In an undertaking that has been wholly admirable from its point of inception to its final carrying-out, the British Council has been sponsoring the placing on wax of outstanding compositions by British composers. The idea, correctly, envisaged the type of large works that might not attract the recording companies by the lure of profits alone. Of the recordings thus far issued, two have reached THE GRAMOPHONE SHOP—Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and Ernest John Moeran's *G-minor Symphony*. Both are big, challenging compositions; both are magnificently performed and recorded. By assisting in their birth, the British Council has well served, not only the cause of Britain and its creative musicians, but the cause of music also.

Moeran (born at London on the last day of 1894) is of Irish descent. To judge from this *Symphony*, he has been somewhat influenced by Ralph Vaughan Williams, by Arnold Bax (and perhaps John Ireland), by Sibelius, and by Stravinsky. He is not a stew of influences, however, but a man who, possessing strong musical personality of his own, has had no fear of reacting to the living music of his own land and other lands. He has previously been represented on records only by chamber music, none of it available on American surfaces. That he will be heard from in the future often and gladly is to be taken as sure.

The *G-minor Symphony* is a highly personalized, rhapsodic work of definitely Irish tint. Its ponderings, like its explosive bursts of action, are Gaelic. It is musically far too richly varied to be absorbed at one or one dozen listenings. Alone, it places Moeran with Walton and two or three others as the leaders of British orchestral music—and shows that music outgrowing its onetime parochial ways without following in the footsteps of Elgar. Heward's conducting, the playing of the Hallé Orchestra, and HMV's spectacularly just recording are absolutely first class. No music-lover, no record-buyer interested in what his own era is doing in the art of music should overlook G-C3319/24.

The odd twelfth side of this recording is occupied by four brief and highly pianistic bagatelles by Alan Rawsthorne (born in Lancashire), who is now thirty-eight. They are persuasively played by Denis Matthews, and are eminently worth hearing. They indicate a not entirely mature composer whose piano style is bounded on the north by Chopin and on the south by Brahms.

RAWSTHORNE: Four Bagatelles, see MOERAN: Symphony.

SCHUBERT (FRANZ PETER)

SCHUBERT: Sonatina No. 1, D major, Opus 137, No. 1 & Rondo from Piano Sonata, D major (arr. Friedberg). Joseph Szigeti (violin) & Andor Foldes (piano). Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set CX-238†; price complete with album \$2.63.

The D-major Schubert *Sonatina* (usually so called for the reason that, though a sonata in form, it is on a relatively small scale) is one of three composed in 1816, and is therefore the work of a nineteen-year-old boy. It is sweepingly melodic, preponderantly gay, and somewhat inconsequential—if that adjective may be used shorn of any derogatory meaning. Our records show only two earlier complete recordings of it—an old one by Albert Sammons and William Murdoch (CM-94, discontinued) and a more modern one by Ossy Renardy and Walter Robert (CX-116†), as we have been unable to hear a recording by Ida Haendel and Adela Kotowska released in England by DECCA last January. Unless this last possesses greater virtues than English reviews have led us to believe, the new recording, with Joseph Szigeti on the crest of his technical and interpretive powers, may be said to be unrivaled. It is in exactly the right spirit.

On the side of instrumental technique, listen—for example—to the remarkable passages of violin and piano in unison in the first movement, passages demonstrating an amazingly wide range of tone color by both Szigeti and Foldes. Or notice the courtly grace of the Mozartian opening of the second movement, the untroubled spontaneity of the third. This reviewer, having heard test pressings by kindness of the COLUMBIA RECORDING CORPORATION, can report heartening excellences in the recording, but can give no report on record surfaces. The odd fourth side, Friedberg's transcription of a piano-sonata movement, is virtuosity for the sake of swift gaiety. Nowhere has Szigeti better showed his unique sense of melodic contour. This set is to be unreservedly recommended to all who like the very best in light music.

WALTON (WILLIAM TURNER)

WALTON: *Belshazzar's Feast*. Huddersfield Choir, Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Brass Bands, Dennis Noble, conducted by William Walton. Five 12" imported records (10 sides) Nos. G-C3330/4; price \$10.50.

The text was selected and arranged from the Bible by Osbert Sitwell. The setting was composed in 1930 or 1931 by Walton. The recording was made under the auspices of the British Council. This adds up to the most exciting (no other word is right or adequate) recording of contemporary music that has appeared for many years. No one can say how either the music or the plangent, powerful performance will endure. But at first, second, and third hearing both are almost shocking in their barbaric brilliance. Here is a package of musical cordite.

Two modern composers have excelled in the choral setting of tales of Biblical times. One was the Honegger of *Judith*, the other is the Walton of *Belshazzar's Feast*. How far we are here from the perfumed pseudo-Orientalism of Massenet, Florent Schmitt, and Saint-Saëns! How the searing dissonances break across the ear with the force of revelation! For here is music that is credibly Old Testament, rich in angry and tempestuous life. This makes much of modern music since the premature death of Stravinsky's muse seem somehow pale and effete. England is very fortunate, indeed, to possess such a primeval source of musical energy as William Walton. At only forty-one, he is a master.

To praise this recording in just language is difficult. The masses of sound are gigantic—but never coagulate into sticky shapelessness. The brasses, as they were intended, cut like fine saws. The solos of Dennis Noble are completely comprehensible as spoken in a vast space. The Huddersfield Choral Society, beautifully trained, is caught in its fortissimos as sharply as in its pianissimos. Walton deserves much of the credit, for his conducting is kinetic and vivid. But HMV's engineers, clearly musicians too, deserve even more, for they have solved brilliantly what must have been one of the most complex problems ever to face them.

Belshazzar's Feast is not set for everyone. It is music that many may legitimately loathe. What cannot be imagined is an indifferent reaction to it as presented here. And those whose feast it is will find it one of the foremost recordings in the modern repertoire.

ARTUR RODZINSKI ON RECORDS

Assistant conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1924, at the age of thirty-two. Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in 1929. Permanent conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra from 1933 to 1943. Organizer of the NBC Symphony Orchestra in 1937-38. And now permanent conductor of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra. Such is the record of Artur Rodzinski's American career. The mere record is nothing. What matters is that it is not a record of mediocrity, but one of solid—and sometimes brilliant—achievement. The Cleveland Orchestra that Rodzinski inherited from Nikolai Sokoloff in 1933 was a good, but far from a first-rate or virtuoso, ensemble. Today it goes into the hands of Erich Leinsdorf as one of the premier orchestras of the United States, and therefore of the world. New York, having watched its own venerable orchestra slowly disintegrate under a mixed and confusing policy of too many guest conductors, a temporarily permanent conductor of insufficient authority, and a general atmosphere of neglect, looks to this same Artur Rodzinski to restore the Philharmonic-Symphony to its rightful place as one of the most capable and subtle of the orchestras.

There is not, among the reasonably long list of recordings made by Rodzinski with the Cleveland Orchestra, one of which he need be ashamed. There are several among them of which he can be very proud. No better illustration of authentic virtuoso performance comes to mind than his recording of Ravel's *Alborada del Gracioso* (C-11910D) or *Rapsodie espagnole* (CX-234†). His Shostakovich *First Symphony* and *Fifth Symphony* are without peers. When he turned to a "difficult" piece of ultramodern music—the Berg *Violin Concerto* (CM-465†), it was to add his insight to the soloist's in the creation of a magistral performance. If Rodzinski's *La Mer* (CM-531†) and *Daphnis et Chloe Suite No. 2* (CX-230†) do not successfully challenge Koussevitzky's, they are nevertheless first-rank interpretations. You can turn to any Cleveland-Rodzinski recording in the certainty that the sonorities (caught in the excelling acoustical atmosphere of Severance Hall) will be rich and plastically modeled. Record-buyers must now look forward to the hour when conditions will bring them the first recordings of Rodzinski with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony (made, as the case may require, either in Carnegie Hall or in the especially suitable hall of New York's old Liederkrantz). For Rodzinski may be depended upon, now and in the future, to bring a new galvanic force into the musical life of America's largest city.

THE RODZINSKI RECORDINGS

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 1, C, Opus 21. Four 12" records (8 sides) in Set CM-535†; price complete with album \$4.73.

BERG

Concerto for violin and orchestra. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set CM-465†; price complete with album \$3.68.

BERLIOZ

Symphonie fantastique, Opus 14. Six 12" records (12 sides) in Set CM-488†; price complete with album \$6.83.

DEBUSSY

La Mer. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set CM-531†; price complete with album \$3.68.

JARNEFELT

Praeludium. One 12" Side in Sibelius: Symphony No. 5, E flat (CM-514†).

KERN

Showboat: Scenario for Orchestra. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set CM-495†; price complete with album \$3.68.

MENDELSSOHN

A Midsummer Night's Dream: Incidental Music. Four 12" records (8 sides) in Set CM-504†; price complete with album \$4.73.

MUSSORGSKY

Khovanshchina: Prelude. One 12" side in Tchaikovsky: Romeo and Juliet (CM-478†).

RAVEL

Alborada del Gracioso. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-11910D; price \$1.05.

Daphnis et Chloe Suite No. 2. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set CX-230†; price complete with album \$2.63.

Rapsodie espagnole. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set CX-230†; price complete with album \$2.63.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Scheherazade, Opus 35. Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set CM-398†; price complete with album \$5.78.

SHOSTAKOVICH

Symphony No. 1, F, Opus 10. Four 12" records (8 sides) in Set CM-472†; price complete with album \$4.73.

Symphony No. 5, Opus 47. Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set CM-520†; price complete with album \$5.78.

SIBELIUS

Finlandia. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-11178D; price \$1.05.

Symphony No. 5, E flat. Four 12" records (8 sides) in Set CM-514†; price complete with album \$4.73.

STRAUSS, RICHARD

Ein Heldenleben, Opus 40. Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set CM-441†; price complete with album \$5.78.

Der Rosenkavalier: Waltzes. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-11542D; price \$1.05.

Salome: Salome's Dance. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-11781D; price \$1.05.

Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set CX-210†; price complete with album \$2.63.

TCHAIKOVSKY

Marche slave. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-11567D; price \$1.05.

Overture 1812. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set CX-265†; price complete with album \$2.63.

Romeo and Juliet. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set CM-478†; price complete with album \$3.68.

Symphony No. 5, E minor, Opus 64. Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set CM-406†; price complete with album \$5.78.

WEBER

Der Freischütz: Overture. 12" record (2 sides) No. C-11817D; price \$1.05.

WEINBERGER

Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set CX-161†; price complete with album \$2.63.

COLLECTIONS

FAMOUS RED ARMY SONGS. Red Army Chorus, conducted by A. V. Alexandrov. Two 12" records (4 sides) in Set S-250; price complete with album \$2.62.

The selections in this album are: *Meadowland*, *Border to Border*, *Do Not Touch Us*, *The Young Birch Tree*, *My Moscow*, *Song of My Native Land*, *If War Breaks Out Tomorrow*, and *Horses of Steel*. *Meadowland* is the familiar and stirring *Song of the Plains*, and is here given an excellent performance. In fact, the performances of all the songs in this album are good. Unfortunately, the recording is poor if compared with the best American efforts. But the surfaces are smooth, and the spirit and authority of the performances go a long way toward making up for the comparative flatness of the recording. Those who prefer 12" records, also, will here find some of the best Red Army songs presented in that form.

FIGHTING SONGS OF THE U.S.S.R. Leningrad Military Chorus, Mixed Choir and Orchestra, Women's Choir and Orchestra, Lentfilm Studio Choir, S. Lemesheff (tenor), S. Chromchenko (tenor), and P. Kirichek (baritone). Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set S-232; price complete with album \$2.89.

No musical manifestation of World War II has approached, in abundance or vitality, that of the singing Russians. This new album of Russian war songs includes: *Holy War*, *In the Fight for the Fatherland*, *A Toast to Victory*, *Harvest Time Song*, *Bell Song*, *Victory Love Song*, and *Red Navy Songs*. They seem above the average recording from the U.S.S.R. in point of mechanical excellence. Surfaces are adequate. A most interesting collection.

DICTION

GETTYSBURG ADDRESS. Dr. Harry Morgan Ayres. 10" record (2 sides) No. HP-68; price \$1.57.

On this interesting—and probably controversial—record, Dr. Harry Morgan Ayres reads Lincoln's Gettysburg Address twice. On the first side, he reads in what he calls "the somewhat glossy style heard today." On the second, he reads the speech, as he says, as it might have sounded "if you had heard it delivered on November 19, 1863." Dr. Ayres' conception of the American pronunciation and diction of eighty years ago is something of a shock at first. It is to be assumed, however, that he has evolved it after careful study. Whatever your reactions, here is an out-of-the-ordinary diction record.

SHAKESPEARE. Dr. Harry Morgan Ayres. 10" record (2 sides) No. HP-71; price \$1.57.

How did an actor of Shakespeare's day pronounce the English language and deliver Hamlet's famous soliloquy? How might he have read Portia's "quality of mercy" speech? The intrepid Dr. Harry Morgan Ayres attempts on this record to answer those questions. The results have a definitely Irish sound. Dr. Ayres knows they have an Irish sound, and defends that sound in his brief opening remarks. We, accustomed to think Shakespeare's lines mis-handled unless wrapped in the cultured accents of the contemporary British stage, may want to disagree with his findings. But his readings carry their own conviction. It is a relief to find a man reading literature as though it were alive and changeable instead of dead and rigid.

VERGIL-CICERO. Dr. Harry Morgan Ayres. 10" record (2 sides) No. HP-70; price \$1.57.

Dr. Harry Morgan Ayres apparently has no fear. What he has attempted here is nothing less than a reading of the opening lines of the *Aeneid* "somewhat as they might have sounded when declaimed in public by a not too good poet" and of the opening lines of Cicero's first oration against Catiline "as they might have sounded when delivered to a Roman audience that delighted in oratory." Dr. Ayres will undoubtedly receive a stiff mail from "authorities" disagreeing with his pronunciation and enunciation of Latin. He will not receive any letters from bored listeners, for boredom is a quality his readings lack. Latin sounds less like what it is (a dead language) and more like what it once was (a very lively living language) in his readings than you would think possible before hearing HP-70.

HUMOR

DWIGHT FISKE. We have the following Dwight Fiske GALA records in stock. Some of them are repressings of earlier releases, but several are new releases. Each is a two-sided 12" record selling for \$1.32.

SPRING IN RHODE ISLAND & PUTZY GOLD. GALA-191

DR. CINNAMON & THE HAIR OF THE WOLF. GALA-189

POGEY BROWN & THE CENSORED LETTER. GALA-188

THE KING AND THE QUEEN & THE LAST CURE. GALA-173

MR. WEBSTER & MOLLY O'TOOLE, THE FAN DANCER. GALA-167

THE COLONEL'S TROPICAL BIRD & MR. SEVEN. GALA-162

COLUMBUS AND ISABELLA & AFRICA WHISPERS. GALA-135

WEEK END & VERA YOUNG. GALA-134

WING-TOY AND KY-FY & TILLY THE PURE WHITE LEGHORN. GALA-108

ADAM AND EVE & ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA. GALA-103

CLARISSA THE FLEA & IDA, THE WAYWARD SURGEON. GALA-100

MRS. PETTIBONE & TWO HORSES AND A DEBUTANTE. GALA-099

MARCHES

MARCHING TO VICTORY. Victory March Band. Three 10" records (6 sides) in Set HARMONIA-2; price complete with album \$2.79.

This album contains: *The Army Air Corps March, Semper Paratus, Anchors Aweigh, The Stars and Stripes Forever, The Marines' Hymn, and The Caissons Go Rolling Along.* The renditions are not of a robustness or an accuracy to discourage amateur bands or bandmasters. The surfaces seem better than average.

STAR SAPPHIRE NEEDLE

Duotone claims "5000 perfect plays" for the Duotone Star Sapphire Needle. In response to many requests from our clients, we now stock this needle, which sells for \$5.00.

TONE-ART ORGAN RECORDINGS

In response to numerous requests, we herewith list in detail the three TONE-ART records made by Grover J. Oberle on the organ at St. Thomas Church, New York. They are very good recordings of organ tone, and present music otherwise unobtainable. They are 12" records, and sell for \$1.57 each (or \$4.71 as a set of three).

PURCELL, HENRY: Suite from *Bonduca* (Hornpipe, Air, Trumpet Tune) & **COUPERIN, FRANCOIS:** *Soeur Monique* (arr. Oberle). TONE-ART No. 1/2; price \$1.57.

VIERNE, LOUIS: *Pièces de Fantaisie*, Opus 53—Toccata & Symphony No. 2, Opus 20—Scherzo. TONE-ART No. 3/4; price \$1.57.

KARG-ELERT, SIGFRID: Choral Improvisation, Now Thank We All Our God & **BRAHMS, JOHANNES:** Chorale-Prelude, My Heart Is Filled with Longing. TONE-ART No. 5/6; price \$1.57.

POPULAR

BING CROSBY. Bing Crosby, with orchestras, some directed by Victor Young. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set B-1012; price \$3.67.

From the old BRUNSWICK files, DECCA (under the BRUNSWICK label) has chosen eight sides of Bing Crosby of fine early vintage. The songs are: *Out of Nowhere*, *If You Should Ever Need Me*, *Just One More Chance*, *Now That You're Gone*, *I Found a Million Dollar Baby*, *I'm Thru With Love*, *Good Night Sweetheart*, and *Too Late*. All the recordings date from 1931. They have stood up amazingly well, and form a fitting memento of an early style of America's prime male stylist in the popular song.

HARLEM JAZZ, 1930. Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, Don Redman and His Orchestra, Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra, Luis Russell and His Orchestra. Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set B-1009; price complete with album \$3.67.

In this collection of reissued recordings, designed to memorialize the Harlem jazz of the 1930's, the following numbers are presented: (Ellington) *Double Check Stomp* and *Jolly Wog*, (Redman) *Chant of the Weed* and *Shakin' the African*, (Henderson) *Radio Rhythm* and *Just Blues*, and (Russell) *Saratoga Drag* and *Case on Dawn*. Each record label carries the names of the personnel of the recording band, and the accompanying booklet of notes is both informative and interesting. BRUNSWICK's Collectors' Series keeps up the high standards with which it began.

MUSIC OF ALL NATIONS. A. Jezavito Radio Orkestras, Sotero and His Mexican Guitarras, Leon and His Cuban Boys, Sula Musette Orchestra, Russian Gypsy Caravan, Guttersohn with Orchestra, Continental Polka Orchestra, and Josef a jeho Vesel Chlapci. Six 10" records (12 sides) in Set CON-7; price complete with album \$5.24.

The selections in this international album (Lithuania, Mexico, Italy, Cuba, Russia, and the United States are among the countries represented) are: *Radio Polka*, *Accor-*

dion Polka, *Why Do I Love You?* (not Kern), *Tropical Love*, *Funiculi-Funicula*, *Boublitchki*, *Shepherd From Appenzel*, *The Village Band*, *Pennsylvania Polka*, *Under the Apple Tree Polka*, *Ale-Di-Di Polka*, and *Markytanka Polka*. It contains accordions, yodelers, Mexican guitars, and a miscellany of other features. The recordings vary in quality, as do the surfaces.

POLISH MELODIES. Continental Polska Orkiestra, Orkiestra Harmonistow, Orkiestra S. Lewisza, Orkiestra Syrena Rekord, Orkiestra Ludowa Syrena Rekord, and Warszawska Reprezentacyjna Orkiestra. Five 10" records (10 sides) in Set CON-8; price complete with album \$4.46.

In this album you will find: *Kwiatki Polka*, *Julcia Polka*, *Manka w Lewo Polka*, *Dla Mamy Mazurka*, *Stary Cygan Waltz*, *Rekrut na Urlopje Polka*, *Fejotka Polka*, *A On Ja Za Specyjol*, *Komendant Pilsudski*, and *Menuet Paderewskiego*, this last a straightforward orchestration of Paderewski's famous minuet. Poland is here represented by polkas, a waltz, a mazurka, a march, and a minuet. The recordings are variable in quality, the surfaces not at the highest American level.

RIVERBOAT JAZZ: New Orleans to Chicago. King Oliver's Dixie Syncopators, Dewey Jackson's Peacock Orchestra, Jelly Roll Morton's Levee Serenaders, Jimmy Wade and His Dixielanders (with Punch Miller), Albert Wynn's Gut Bucket Five, and Albert Wynn's Creole Jazz Band (with Punch Miller). Four 10" records (8 sides) in Set B-1010; price complete with album \$3.67.

Style in jazz has many gradations, multiple nuances. No non-expert dares to use its extravagant terminology. Suffice it to say, then, that this album's title is supplemented with the phrase "as played by famous jazzmen on the Mississippi." The selections are: (Oliver) *Snag It*, (Jackson) *Capitol Blues*, (Morton) *Mr. Jelly Lord* and *Midnight Mama*, (Wade) *Gates Blues*, (Wynn's Gut Bucket Five) *Parkway Stomp*, and (Wynn's Creole Jazz Band) *Down By the Levee* and *She's Cryin' For Me*. All have moments of something like inspiration. This is an outstandingly interesting collection of recordings, many of which have been unobtainable for years.

SECOND REVIEWS

Herewith we inaugurate, in frank imitation of a department in our admired English contemporary, *The Gramophone*, a series of "second reviews." The purpose of this feature will be, from time to time, to re-estimate, call attention to, or otherwise relist records and sets originally reviewed in these pages on their first appearance. Some will be written about here because of the music recorded, some because of the performance. As it would be pointless for us to relist records we cannot supply, it may be assumed that, at the time of any "second review," the individual records or sets thus discussed are in our stock.

BACH (CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL)

BACH: Symphony No. 3, C & MIASKOVSKY: *Sinfonietta* for string orchestra, Opus 32, No. 2 & ARENSKY: Variations on a Theme of Tchaikovsky, Opus 35A & SIBELIUS: Canzonetta, Opus 62A ("Program No. 1"). NBC String Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Frank Black. Seven 12" records (14 sides) in Set VM-390†; price complete with album \$7.87.

VICTOR put the Miaskovsky *Sinfonietta* in first place in "Program No. 1" of the NBC String Symphony Orchestra, but there can be little doubt that the Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach *Symphony in C major* is nonetheless the prime reason for owning VM-390†. This stimulating eighteenth-century music-making was from the beginning the chief attraction in a collection of four compositions of which no other recording was available when this one was issued. (The fact that later recordings of the Arensky and the Sibelius have appeared detracts nothing from the values of the generally better realizations of even those pieces in this set.) As long, of course, as one continues to insist upon comparing this Bach with his towering father, he must appear minuscule. Listened to for himself, he is discovered to be an apt, lively, and frequently moving composer much closer to Haydn than to Johann Sebastian. This C-major *Symphony* happens to be one of his most delightful works, and Dr. Black leads his men through a fine reading of it.

Miaskovsky is too eclectic, too derivative, to have much personality or individuality of his own. None will be bored listening to his *Sinfonietta*; none will be excited. Also, the suspicion persists that Dr. Black is less at home here. It is interesting, however, to have one of the few recorded examples of the orchestral music of the most prolific symphonist of modern times—Miaskovsky is sixty-two and has composed more than twenty symphonies. In this case, one must admit, it is impossible not to suspect—on insufficient evidence—that his classical prolificness is in reality a prolixity resulting from spreading too little matter over too much space. Arensky's skillful orchestral variations on a children's song by Tchaikovsky ("Christ Had a Garden," Opus 54, No. 5) make a more attractive composition. They have a veiled beauty of a lightly brooding, sensuous sort that many listeners find compelling, and Dr. Black serves that beauty well. The Sibelius *Canzonetta*, definitely minor Sibelius, altogether lacks distinction, but does not disturb.

A certain acoustic deadness in the recordings of the four compositions must be noted. It is not flagrant enough to be actively annoying, for it is likely to be discovered only if these records are compared with some of superior all-encompassing fidelity. It should prevent no one who enjoys good music out of the usual ruts, and that music adequately played, from investigating the considerable claims to his attention wrapped up in VM-390†. Disregard Miaskovsky and Sibelius if you will—C. P. E. Bach and Arensky are here presented in a most attractive light.

BACH (JOHANN SEBASTIAN)

BACH: Sonata No. 6 (Partita No. 3), E, for unaccompanied violin. Yehudi Menuhin (violin). Three 12" records (5 sides) in Set VM-488†; price complete with album \$3.15.

Two movements of the third Bach *Partita* for unaccompanied violin have won wide popularity separated from their parent work and arranged both for orchestra and for accompanied solo instruments. For even in the hands of Bach himself, an unaccompanied violin (or cello) does not appeal at once to the many listeners capable of enjoying the great melodies in his unaccompanied sonatas. It takes a very great violinist or cellist (perhaps, in the latter category, only Casals) to overcome the technical risks involved in playing one of these unsupported works. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Yehudi Menuhin who recorded the E-major *Partita* packaged in VM-488† was such an artist. Without abating one jot a prejudice against the violin unaccompanied (or as a solo instrument even when accompanied), it is possible to find Menuhin's performance to be of a surpassing beauty no transcription could ever hope to match.

In Menuhin's reading, the magnificent *Preludio* and gay *Gavotte en rondeau* reveal individualities lost in every transcription. The other movements have undoubtedly failed of separate popularity because of being on a slightly, but unmistakably, lower level of musical interest. Without idolatry, however, one can say that a Bach nodding is more interesting than many a Telemann or Dittersdorf wide awake. Menuhin plays every movement with superb and justified assurance and consistent round loveliness of tone. No scratchings and scrapings here, but pure sounds of a violin. The recording matches the playing to make a set of records as pervaded by lofty qualities as Casals' recordings of the unaccompanied cello sonatas—and that is praise of the highest kind.

BEETHOVEN (LUDWIG VAN)

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 7, A, Opus 92.* New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini. Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set VM-317†; price complete with album \$5.77.

Time has not been kind to several of the Toscanini recordings, especially those made by the NBC Symphony Orchestra in Radio City's Studio 8-H. Not that those recordings were entirely satisfactory even at first blush. The lack of resonance, the general effect of having been played in a vacuum, were evident at once. Now to listen to those recordings is to be amazed that Toscanini approved their being issued to the public and that VICTOR saw fit to risk its own and the conductor's reputations by sponsoring them. Even, for example, if Toscanini's reading of the Beethoven *Fifth Symphony* (VM-640†) was the greatest ever played into microphones—a finding it is difficult to contravert—what the best reproducing machine in the world is able to obtain from the records is nevertheless a travesty of both Beethoven and Toscanini. Every instrument sounds as if it were equipped with a damper used immediately after the sounding of each note. The music has died, leaving only an unhappy ghost behind.

How different it is to turn to Toscanini's older recording of the Beethoven *Seventh Symphony*, played by the New York Philharmonic-Symphony in its greatest days, recorded in a technically suitable hall! Here the great conductor's unique gift for revealing and galvanizing Beethoven is evident not only by deduction, but in the vivid sounds themselves. Not only the best reproducing machine, but any adequate machine, will spin off these surfaces a performance that justifies the whole science and business of recording. Here are not only the tempos that mark Toscanini off from all but a few leaders, the sculptural shaping of melodic lines and phrases, the exactness of balances that demonstrate real insight into what Beethoven intended by the written notes, but also warming, golden sound allowed to breathe and vibrate in a living space. In retrospect, VM-317† looms as one of the great accomplishments, as flawless a recording as any Beethoven symphony has ever received.

LOEFFLER (CHARLES MARTIN)

LOEFFLER: *Music for Four Stringed Instruments.* Coolidge Quartet. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set VM-543†; price complete with album \$3.67.

Of German ancestry, born in Alsace in the early part of Napoleon III's reign, Charles Martin Loeffler lived seventy-four years, to die in 1935 a very un-American

American composer. "Un-American," one says, for the elegant, sensuous textures of his best music are far indeed from any American norm. He is closer to Debussy (even at times to Franck) than to any native American composer one could name. The only American he can remind us of at all, and that but for moments, is Griffes. But he is on a bigger scale, wrought of denser matter than the composer of *The Pleasure Dome of Kubla Khan*. He is troubling because he is as hard to docket as Scriabin. Some critics find him otherwise troubling, for they dislike what they deem a decadent richness in his harmonies, in his unrelenting search for ever new and more exact ways of clothing not always very structural musical ideas. Yet his unique power and charm are hard to deny, and rare enough in modern music to be worth our continuing attention.

Music for Four Stringed Instruments, composed in Loeffler's sixty-second year, is a three-movement string quartet, and is certainly not the music of an aged or a world-weary man. The composer dedicated it to the memory of a United States aviator killed in the First World War, and part of it has a serene elegiac tone. Loeffler was wonderfully accurate in making two violins, one viola, and one cello do his bidding. He made them sing together with novel, almost brocaded, richness. The result is a masterpiece, a second-flight masterpiece to be sure, but not at all a second-rate one. It is impossible, offhand, to name its superior in the list of American chamber works.

In no other of its recordings has the Coolidge Quartet sounded as well as it does in VM-543†. Nor is this merely because its performance need not compete here—as in Beethoven quartets—with that of unquestionably more accomplished ensembles. Something in the very nature of Loeffler's music, perhaps close acquaintance with the man and his music, stirred Messrs. Kroll, Berezowsky, Moldavan, and Gottlieb to their best efforts. Their performance is unexceptionable. They were recorded superbly. The total result is a recording of wholly unusual virtues and merit. Not to have heard VM-543† is to have missed something of high value because it is a little removed from main-traveled paths.

MOZART (WOLFGANG AMADEUS)

MOZART: *Quintet, A, for clarinet and strings, K.581.* Budapest String Quartet & Benny Goodman (clarinet). Three 10" & one 12" record (8 sides) in Set VM-452†; price complete with album \$3.93.

The proposition that the A-major *Clarinet Quintet*, composed in 1789, is one of Mozart's most immediately delightful chamber works is held even by those who can speak of "Mozart's chamber works" from acquaintance with them all. Its unstinted melodic inventiveness and delight, its unceasing exploitation of the timbres and capabilities of

the five instruments, its formal grace—all combine to make it delicious and satisfying. Few would call it profound, but anything more than the most superficial attention forbids calling it superficial. Its appeal to non-enthusiasts for chamber music probably depends upon its almost orchestral conception, the massed character that at times gives it the weight of a clarinet concerto.

The *Clarinet Quintet* has been recorded complete at least four times. Early versions by the Léner Quartet with Charles Draper (CM-124) and the Wendling Quartet with Philipp Dreisbach (PD-95309/12) can now be disregarded. The choice before the prospective purchaser is between the COLUMBIA version played by the Roth Quartet and Simeon Bellison (CM-293†) and the VICTOR, played by the Budapest Quartet and Benny Goodman. Now that the mere prospect of a Mozart performance by one of the emperors of swing can no longer surprise us, it has become possible to weigh these two recordings in an untroubled balance.

The COLUMBIA version has one mechanical advantage—it is pressed on four twelve-inch records, as against the three ten-inch and one twelve-inch of the VICTOR set. Otherwise, careful comparison and the most thoughtful listening would seem to put every weight on the side of the Budapest-Goodman version. There can be no hesitation over ranking the Budapest's flawless playing above the merely good musicianship of the Roth. When the two recordings were first available, however, there was considerable discussion over the relative merits of the two clarinet solos, discussion which, in retrospect, it is impossible not to attribute, in part, to Benny Goodman's swing reputation. Neither solo performance, let it be said at once, is the best imaginable. But the unaccustomed stiffness in some of Goodman's playing (caused, it may be, by an excessively sanctimonious approach to Mozart) is preferable to the utter lifelessness of Bellison's performance. When Goodman unbuttons himself a little (in the second and last movements), his sensitive playing is all to a good that Bellison does not approximate.

A final factor in favor of VM-452† is superior recording. Can it be that the "luck" that has followed the recording career of the Budapest Quartet has derived from some knowledge of engineering by one or more of its members? Certain it is that no group of four strings could ask for more faithful or better monitored recording than this. Once granted the unmistakable woodenness that intermittently prevents Goodman from giving his best, it is possible to single out VM-452† as one of the dozen most permanently satisfactory sets in the whole recorded chamber repertoire.

STRAUSS (RICHARD)

STRAUSS: *Don Quixote*, Opus 35. Emanuel Feuermann (cello), Ignace Hilsberg (violin), & Samuel Lifschey (viola), with the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Five 12" records (10 sides) in Set VM-720†; price complete with album \$5.77.

For those who, like the present reviewer, find more to admire in *Don Quixote* than in any other of Richard Strauss' orchestral compositions, the fact that the "knightly variations" never seem likely to equal the popularity of *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Don Juan* must always be a difficult pill. Some of us—and here it is necessary to be personal in order to be clear—can no longer listen with pleasure to *Also sprach Zarathustra* or *Ein Heldenleben*, and find *Till* and *Don Juan* worn a little thin. But the imaginative richness of *Don Quixote*, the miraculous rightness of its variation form and the selection of solo instruments, and the unwonted tenderness of Strauss' regard for his unseen protagonists continue to make this one of the sovereign masterpieces of modern orchestral music. It is a difficult piece to play well, an extremely difficult piece to record with anything near justice.

There have, curiously, been several good recorded versions of *Don Quixote*. Strauss himself, Beecham, and Reiner each, in a separate way, perpetuated readings that keep their enjoyability. But the best among these several is surely VM-720†, with the Philadelphia Orchestra in superb form, Emanuel Feuermann and the other soloists finely balanced against it, and Ormandy conducting as he does not always conduct. The sensuous, physical lushness of sound, here intentional and inherent to the purpose, could not, perhaps, have been equalled by any other orchestra in the world. To have caught that richness without distortion on records was a triumph of engineering coupled with musical tact.

Advertising pressures, the push of new recordings, and the mere passage of time tend to obscure a little the values of sets issued some years back. When those values are the sort that can be lived with, however, they deserve constant mention. It is with no sense of strain or surprise, then, that it is found possible to say that such a recording as VM-720† is not one more space-filler in the VICTOR catalogue, but one of its brightest ornaments. Those who do not know it could scarcely make a more delightful acquaintance.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Sleeping Beauty*, Opus 66—selections. Sadler's Wells Orchestra, conducted by Constant Lambert. Three 12" records (6 sides) in Set VM-673†; price complete with album \$3.67.

Many factors may stand between a modern music-lover and the music of Tchaikovsky. Distaste for his nineteenth-century melodic richness may make him suspect.

Or the dislike of critics may stand, like an obscuring gas, between music and listener. Yet there can be little doubt that the man was musician throughout or that his failures are errors in taste rather than lapses of musical energy. And his ballet music remains unique. To search *Swan Lake* or *Sleeping Beauty* or *The Nutcracker* for profundities and return with the announcement that they are not there is to state a banal truth, but one that criticizes the search rather than the music. For this is functional music that serves its purpose perfectly.

What is required for right conducting of *Sleeping Beauty* is some acquaintance with ballet in action. It is no accident that the best recording of *Swan Lake* music is led by Antal Dorati, the best of *Sleeping Beauty* by Constant Lambert. These men have led actual performances, and thus have knowledge of the reasons for Tchaikovsky's

rhythms and shifts of tempo. Nor is it fortuitous that the most enjoyable performances of ballet music are those that could be danced to exactly as played, for that type of performance hews closest to the composer's intentions in writing as he did. Constant Lambert is a very knowing conductor as well as an accomplished composer in his own right. The Sadler's Wells Orchestra has played for most of the ballet performances in England in recent years. Their *Sleeping Beauty*—even if one would like to argue with the choice of excerpts—is excellently recorded, and makes one of the best Tchaikovsky sets available. There is no use recording Tchaikovsky at all unless conductor and orchestra are capable of re-creating the true character of the music. The proof is in VM-673† and in Sir Thomas Beecham's *Fifth Symphony* (CM-470†) and in Koussevitzky's *Romeo and Juliet* (VM-347†).

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